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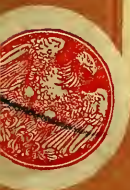
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**RHYMES OF THE FLEET**  
and Other Poems

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**WILLIAM NELSON MORELL**





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# RHYMES OF THE FLEET



RHYMES  
OF THE FLEET  
AND  
OTHER POEMS



WILLIAM NELSON MORELL

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## **Dedication**

*To Walt Winn of Texas  
I dedicate this volume  
of Verse*



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## To the Father of the Fleet

**T**O our friend Joe, whom others know  
As father of the fleet;  
A squarer man, no sailor can  
Wish for in his seat:  
To grip his hand, like an iron band  
Would be life's greatest treat:  
And face to face, by God's grace,  
I hope we'll some day meet.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

### She's A Rattlin' Good Ship

**S**HE'S a rattlin' good ship and a damn fine  
crew;  
Just careless fellows like I and you,  
With nary a tie to bind us home,  
We'll ship over again for a lone soup bone.  
We'll laugh and sing, and cuss and swear,  
And pick up a quarrel without a dare;  
It isn't the money (scarce as hell's snow)  
It's only the life that makes us go.  
No, it isn't dame fame, but the gob's great life,  
That leads us back to the strenuous strife.  
It's the sound of the lashing waves at night,  
Strange lands to see with the morning light;  
New ports to explore as we anchor down —  
New women, new wine in each seaport town.  
A New York skirt or Hawaiian maid,  
For a London "ducky," is a fair enough trade.  
Then out again in a fine sea breeze,  
For a South Sea cruise or a Northern freeze.  
We'll put her bow to an Atlantic gale,  
Or to the Horn and watch her sail.

## AND OTHER POEMS

And when she hits an unseen land,  
We'll stick head to port and wave our hand, —  
To a hula queen in a Pacific isle,  
Or a Spanish duchess, — it's all worth while.  
For she's a rattlin' good ship and a damn fine  
    crew,  
Just careless fellows like I and you —  
With nary a tie to bind us home,  
We'll ship over again for a lone soup bone.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

### The U. S. S. Comfort (Hospital Ship)

THEY never billeted a better crew  
That sailed out of any port,  
Than that which carried the wounded through  
The war zone, — on the new “Comfort.”  
I’d stake my life on anyone  
Of my shipmates on that ship,  
From early morn to setting sun,  
On land, in port, or ocean trip.  
We’ve filled high-up her cargo-decks  
Brimful with healing medical stores  
For wounded, sick, and dying wrecks,  
Balms of Gilead for battle sores.  
We’ll sail full-blast, with all lights on  
Through the sub-infested zone,  
And we carry not a blessed gun, —  
Fate alone, will bring us home!

## AND OTHER POEMS

### Iron Men and Wooden Ships

THE iron men and the wooden ships,  
Have gone with the ebbing tide;  
They have sailed away, beyond the bay —  
Where the nymphs and mermaids hide.  
They have folded their sails with the rotted  
masts,  
Along with the broken spar;  
Ne'er again shall you see their like,  
Go sailing across the bars.  
For they've gone away, forever to stay,  
The pirate buccaneers;  
Their departing leaves but me,  
The salt of their sea-going tears;  
They are lost with the bronze-dyed men  
Who plundered the Spanish Main;  
Now in their place, comes a new race,  
With iron ships to reign.  
For iron ships we have manicured men,  
To man the batteries:  
And that is why, the sea-dogs sigh,  
Who slumber in the seas.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

### The Old Salt's Song

THEY call us hardboiled roughnecks  
When we're off ship for a spree:  
And we start to cash our paychecks,  
Of a three months' cruise at sea.

And if we start to paint the town,  
The well-bred folks stick up their nose  
And down upon us they will frown, —  
And snicker, "There a sailor goes."

But when I'm caged upon a ship,  
Upon a rough and lonesome sea, —  
A-cruising on a six months' trip,  
Ah, little do they know of me!

The passions of those pent-up men,  
Who think and feel as you and I,  
The civilian man will never pen, —  
It makes a hash-mark man to sigh.

## AND OTHER POEMS

We are energetic, full of life  
Just as other men would be;  
We are eager for a dangerous fight,  
With a submarine or a storming sea.

Judge us not at unnatural times,  
As when we're off a lonely cruise;  
(That is the prayer of my rhymes,)  
For then we are a smouldering fuse.

For we have left our folks at home,  
Oft in a moment of reckless rage, —  
So treat us kindly while we roam  
Upon the sea in an iron cage.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

### My Lassie

**M**Y bonnie, bonnie lassie, I am leaving you  
behind,  
For I am going away to sail upon the sea;  
We are struggling for a victory, there is trouble  
in the wind,  
And I hear my shipmates are a' calling unto me,  
Where my country calls, you know I want to be.

My bonnie, bonnie lassie, you'll think of me I  
know,  
When I'm sailing on the tossing battleships;  
For I'll think of you on deck or down below, —  
And I'll ever think of kissing your sweet red  
lips, —  
When the battles are over and I've finished my  
trips.

My bonnie, bonnie lassie, I'll gladly fight for  
you,  
For there is no bonnie lassie, half so sweet;

## AND OTHER POEMS

And I'll gird my armor tighter and consecrate  
anew;

When the battle's over we soon again will meet,  
And I'll lay my earthly treasures at your feet.

Oh, my bonnie, bonnie lassie, how I dread to  
say good-by,

How loth I am to leave you all alone;

But my ship is in the harbor, where the cruisers  
ply,

And I'm leaving you and all the folks at home,—

But I'll always think of you, wherever I may  
roam.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

### The Volunteer's Song

WE gave up our education,  
To get beans for a ration,  
To serve this bloomin' nation, —  
In the war:  
We're in a suit of blue  
(Like a skirt that's cut in two)  
In which we guard the sea for you, —  
As never watched before.  
We left our homes of leisure,  
Not because of pressure,  
For we are men full measure, —  
We're regular volunteers:  
And when it comes to fightin',  
We'll do some damn high lightin',  
And we'll set this world all right in  
A couple of years.  
The sailor's not a bum,  
Out of a bowery slum  
Victim of the demon rum, —  
In civil life:

## AND OTHER POEMS

But he's in this suit of blue,  
(Like a skirt that's cut in two)  
Just to help serve you, —

    In this strife.

He does not beg for sympathy,  
Nor any of your trumpery,  
Because he's in this navy, —

    Treat him like a man:

It is not for your pity,  
That I tinker at this ditty,  
For you in a far-off city, —

    Safe as a clam:

For it is but a greeting,  
To tell how you are treating,  
Men who hold a better rating, —

    Than you can.

And this I say to you,  
That the volunteer U. S. crew,  
Will stick to the guns, — true-blue,  
    For good old Uncle Sam.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

### In Port

WE were anchored in the Brooklyn Yard  
One balmy night this spring,  
While we were waiting there, my pard,  
We all began to dance, and sing.  
We sat down on the hurricane deck  
And listened to some old banjos,  
Playing that old ragtime wreck  
Which every sea-going sailor knows:  
“Its a long, long way to Davy Jones,  
Ten thousand leagues or more,  
Where fishes live on sailors’ bones,  
And there ain’t no bloomin’ shore.”  
The stars and moon shone on the bay  
Competing with the lights of town;  
And the lights of white old gay Broadway,  
These natural beauties couldn’t drown.  
The music that my shipmates played  
Is dearer far to me  
Than any refrains “ready-made”  
Far from the taste of the briny sea.

## AND OTHER POEMS

We smoked our Missouri cobs  
And regal meerschaums, briars too;  
Such is the life of the roving gobs,  
Those happy days are all too few.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

(To Mrs. E. T.)

SHE is mother of the squadron,  
She is Angel of the fleet,  
She is my shipmate's guardian,  
And you'll find her hard to beat.  
Her home is open to us,  
On every day of the year, —  
And in it there'll be no fuss  
Of etiquette, — but right good cheer.  
She is a lady by breeding,  
And a blueblood by right of birth, —  
Night and day she is leading  
Clubs for sailors, soldiers' mirth.  
Thank God, there still are mothers  
As those we left at home  
While away from ours there are others,  
To cheer us as we roam.

## AND OTHER POEMS

### The Wanderer's Song

**I** LONG for the western islands  
And for the western sea;  
I yearn for the foamy ocean,  
With a sail unto the lee.

The rugged jack pines call me  
And their elusive breezes keen,  
Bear the fragrance of the islands  
To the wanderer's happy dream.

The ocean sunset calls me,  
With its golden luring rays,  
And I leave my native fancies  
To sail where the tempest plays.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

### Jimmy-Legs

WAS there ever a sailor who didn't hate  
To roll out when he was told,  
By Jimmy-legs who pipes-never late,  
"Hit the deck" in a voice grown bold.  
When in the mess hall eating chow,  
And you grab for an extra dish or two  
It's Jimmy-legs that shows you how  
To sleep in a brig — just built for you.  
If you're making knots for the starboard watch  
When you should be on port,  
It's Jimmy-legs who drops the match  
And you're up for a summary-court.  
If you're up the shute or down the shute,  
Jimmy-legs, he'll put you there, —  
Say your prayer you lubberly boot,  
He'll get your hide and hair.  
Jimmy-legs must travel alone,  
On every ship that ever sailed, —  
For he has neither friends nor home,  
And when on shore he's always traile'd;  
So say your prayer you lubberly boot,  
He'll get your hide and hair.

## AND OTHER POEMS

### The Chicken's Breast\*

THE officers get the chicken's breast, and we  
do all the fight, —  
We get the tough meatless wings, — now is  
that just right?  
We only get a hunk of bone,  
What tastes like chawing on a stone.  
The officers get the cream of all the chicken  
roast,  
And in a scrap, why we always battle most!  
You can see the best of things in an officer's  
mess,  
And when it comes to scrappin', why they're  
mostly less.  
We don't mind doin' menial things,  
When o'er the land the war cry rings, —  
We'll swab a deck or man the guns,  
To prove that yet we're freedmen's sons, —  
But why not give us sailor-men  
The breast of the chicken, now and then? .

\* This poem was inspired by the sight of a plate of nicely roasted chicken's breast on an officer's mess table. It is a common practice to give the tender meat of a chicken to the officers, while the remnants are given to the privates.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

### Pipe Dreams

I'VE smoked many a pipe of tobac,  
From many a foreign port:  
In regal meerschaums and in Briar's black, —  
With tobacco of every sort.

I've smoked when blue and weary,  
I've puffed when feeling fine;  
In weather wet and dreary, —  
On a transatlantic line.

But no pipe so sweet in this nation,  
And never such Egyptian tobac;  
As I smoked on that scum of creation, —  
That bloomin' Adirondack.

## AND OTHER POEMS

### Evening Colors

WHEN the gleam of evening sunset  
Strikes old Glory in the sky,  
'Ere the colors sound,  
Her banners lingeringly fly  
In a field of golden clouds rolling by.  
Emblem of a ship of state,  
Victorious all has met, —  
We lower the flag  
With the evening sunset.  
And the band plays the anthem,  
Inspirationally sung  
'Mid the roar of battle, —  
Then swells my heart  
Like the breeze which plies  
The thrice honored colors  
Where freedom lies.  
Oh! lead us to battle! We will follow thee,  
To the fields of France or the storms of sea,  
To battle! to battle! to make men free!

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

### The Death Watch

**I** THOUGHT I had seen much of life,  
And lived through many a strenuous  
    strife;  
But now I saw life ebb away,  
    Through silent hours of agony;  
And heard the quick hard gasps for breath  
Which heralded an early death:  
And watched through endless hours of night,  
The fingers clutched in uneven fight.  
Beheld that white face writhe with pain,  
Concealing the fear which soldiers disdain.  
Yet eyes will tell what we dare not say, —  
They pleaded for but one more day, —  
Which stubborn death refused to give.  
We have but our little time to live,  
And when that hour doth appear, —  
When the last gasp leaves the lips,  
(And the reaper's scythe with red blood drips)  
I gently fold the white sheets over him,  
My dry mouth sobs a silent requiem.

## AND OTHER POEMS

### Cannon Fodder

(On The Death of a Friend in France)

**H**E is gone! His merry laugh  
Resounds no more above the clash:  
The smile that yesterday was his, is gone;  
The iron body, to all disease immune,  
Fell to the cannon, like so much trash.  
Titan, herculean strength is not spared  
In battle, where fumes and flames of hell are  
bared.

Yesterday when in friendly grasp you gripped  
his hands,  
Could you think today that hand clasps death?  
That his restless soul would break its bands,  
Through the path of shells and the cannons'  
breath?

Slumber in peace, O tireless spirit;  
You needs have balm to sooth your aching head.  
For there, in lethean sleep you dream of a cross  
of merit,  
While the body rots on a field of thousands dead.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

### The Veteran's Advice

IT'S soft to speak of glory in the peace of  
civil life,  
A-sittin' by the fire a-talkin' to your wife;  
It's fine to see the soldiers paradin' down the  
street,  
An' listin' to the trampin' of a thousan' march-  
in' feet:  
It's nice to dream of chargin' 'gainst the Huns,  
An' snore to the rippin' rattlin' of a 'undred  
gattlin' guns.  
But when you live in dugouts in water to your  
knees,  
A' wallowin' like a schooner in the antarctic  
seas,  
With shrapnel on your bombproofs playin'  
peculiar tunes,  
And bodies of your comrades lyin' amidst the  
ruins,  
And Boches bother you at meals with a big  
Krupp cannon ball, —

## AND OTHER POEMS

When your ration's tastin' ancient and starva-  
tion small;  
Then you pray for the safety of your old fire-  
side,  
Or wish to God that in the very first attack  
you'd died.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

### The Voice of a French Soldier\*

**H**OW beautiful they blossomed yesterday!—  
The fields of France in golden fragrance  
lay.

The orchards burdened with their harvest yields,  
And air perfumed with the incense of the fields.  
The cattle in their pastures slowly grazed,  
While o'er the lane, the colts in freedom raced.  
The peace of autumn veiled the hidden strife;  
Until the God of Mars awoke to life.  
The foe in hordes of steel came from the North—  
In answer to the challenge our sons came forth  
The battering of a thousand belching guns,  
Shattered the noblest of our sons,—  
Yet they came up to our very gate:  
Chapel and hearth were objects of their hate;  
The shrine no sanctity to them bore,  
To their Kultur our France was but a sore:  
Where we knelt to pray, they did deride,  
And called the God of Justice on their side.

\* On meeting a member of the Norton-Harjes Ambulance Corps. Oct. 11, 1917.

## AND OTHER POEMS

Now the fields of France are but a pit,  
Where ghosts and spirits calmly sit:  
And for the sake of peace, their souls demand  
The world to drive the dragon from the land.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

### France!

OUT of thy Elysian reverie,  
Art thou awakened, —  
Land of history, and mystery  
Where liberty was born.  
Has Gambetta touched thee again?  
The spirit of Lamartine  
Moves Gallic braves to battle,  
Where blood flows thick and red:  
To struggle o'er comrades  
That are dead.  
In the vanguard waves thy banner,  
Streams thy blood.  
Thy aides look on with wonder;  
Enemies admire;  
Mankind awakened from a lethean dream  
Sees France reborn.  
'Mid din of cannon and pools of blood,  
Where in rebellion she was born,  
To hold a fortress.  
Wherein are hidden,  
Liberty, Equality, Fraternity:

## AND OTHER POEMS

Where strains of Marseillaise  
And roar of musketry mingle, —  
Move phantom legions of past wars,  
In tricolor and cocade  
To fight for France!

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

### Kitchener Lives!

**K**ITCHENER dead? No, it is an empty  
boast,  
For yesternight upon this green,  
In blood mud-spattered khaki I have seen, —  
And his iron smile reviewed his host.  
Kitchener dead? Only fools will say,  
That he who held the Hun at bay,  
Beneath the grinding surf does lie.  
Last night while on my post I saw  
The iron soldier's troops pass by,  
There too was Kitchener, spite of natural law.

## AND OTHER POEMS

### The Country's Call

THE halls of the castle are silent,  
With a stillness deep, as death, —  
For they wait from the field of battle,  
The news with a throbbing breath.

The castle's golden splendor is spurned  
For the trenches' fare,  
And the young lord leaves for the foremost  
ranks  
Without a care.

The cottage walls resound no more  
With the youthful peasant's song,  
For he has answered the nation's call, —  
And joined her glorious throng.

The shepherd's hut is empty now  
For its youth has gone away,  
To feed the cannon of the foe,  
And keep the Hun at bay.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

In each home a mother waits,  
Patiently day by day, in vain;  
While her own on the field of battle,  
Lies with the thousands slain.

But oh, how proud is the mother,  
That sacrifice has paid;  
And on the altar of freedom  
Her diaden has laid!

## AND OTHER POEMS

### Songs of the Desert

**F**AR o'er the terraced desert land, —  
    Breezes moaning,  
    Winds blow droning,  
Winds play tunes on the desert sand.

On mountain peaks  
The fir tree creaks,  
And simoons blowing,  
Lowing, lowing,  
Sand dunes sowing,  
Winds play tunes on the desert sand.  
The coyotes crying, —  
A shepherd sighing,  
In the far hills  
In Noman's land;  
Where the flocks are roaming,  
Thru' the half-lit gloaming,  
O'er the hills to their home:  
As the winds sing songs on the desert sand.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

### Ailinn of Ulster

**B**Y the murmur of the ocean,  
By the green waves of the sea,  
'Neath the moon, a sweet emotion,  
Moved him like a minstrelsy;  
Did not fair Ailinn smile on him,  
With her eyes so heavenly,  
Twinkling eyes so luringly;  
Under moon, and stars, and heaven,  
By the waves upon the sea,  
By the gods beneath the sea,  
For the druids who are seven,  
Ailinn thee I love, quoth Baile,  
Fair maiden, thee I love eternally.

And from out the murmuring ocean,  
O'er the green waves of the sea,  
Came a voice in trembling motion,  
Paling face of strong Baile;  
"Ye shall love no more in Ulsterland,  
Ne'er Baile love the fair Ailinn;  
Son of Buan dies on the strand,  
Your love in heaven shall be queen."

## AND OTHER POEMS

The accents rolled with splashing waves;  
Over the purple red moon's sea,  
Over the dashing, surging sea,  
And sounded thru' the mountain caves:  
As flashed the light in Baile's eyes,  
And sorrowing Ailinn deeply sighs.  
The glow of the moon flowed o'er the heavens,  
Down to the edge of the wave-kissed shore;  
While soundly slept the sickly cravens,  
In the palace by the moor.  
Fair Baile and the pale Ailinn,  
Kissed and parted in their tears;  
Could she not be the Ulster's queen?  
The Voice had kindled gnawing fears:  
Again they kissed in last embrace,  
Their love no druids could efface.  
"When comes again the full-moon golden —  
We will meet in Dundee-algan,  
By the sacred oak of olden,  
Where our love it first began —"  
Thus they parted, deep regretting, —  
With the pale moon in its setting.

Many hours of patient waiting,  
Many nights of listless dreams,

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

For the golden moontime meeting,  
By Dundee-algan's golden streams.

Mounted steeds with golden strappings,  
Chariots blazoned with myriad jewels,  
Knights a-glitter in silver trappings,  
Burdened with gifts the Gallic mules;  
Forth goes the king for Ulster's queen,  
To the strand of Dundee-algan,  
To the sacred oak of olden;  
To take from the Southland, fair Ailinn;  
Bugles blowing, banners flowing,  
Moves the train from Ulster castle,  
Meet they with a stranger vassal;  
"Stop!" he cries as loud could be,  
"What ho!" asks Baile in alarm,  
"Is this not Ulster that I see?"  
"Has to Ailinn come any harm?"  
The stranger paused to have his say,  
And Baile pales beneath his gold;  
"This morning as she came away  
The Leinsters took her to be sold:  
There she died of broken heart,  
That she from Baile must depart."  
King Baile swooned and life went out.  
The stranger parted like a blast,

## AND OTHER POEMS

The train in mourning turned about,  
And back to Ulster hurried fast.

When Baile died upon the strand,  
And flowers o'er his bier were laid;  
Ailinn set out from the Southland,  
To keep the promise she had made.  
A stranger came in deep dismay,  
And bid himself be heard;  
"Hast thou of Ulster aught to say?"  
"Peace be with you but a word:  
This morning as he came away,  
The Leinsters took him to be sold,  
There he died of broken heart,  
That he from Ailinn must depart."  
Ailinn swooned and life went out.  
The stranger parted like a blast,  
The train in mourning turned about,  
And to the Southland hurried fast.

O'er his grave a yew-tree blowing,  
O'er her grave the apples growing:  
By the sacred oak of olden,  
By the waters that are golden,  
By the strand of Dunde-algan,  
Near the green waves of the sea.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

### To Estelle R.

**W**E *were* strangers, I'll admit,  
And you were quite conscious of it;  
But when you found me sitting lonely, —  
You said you would waltz — once only.  
You didn't think what it would bring,  
That dance was to me no little thing;  
And when I asked to call on you,  
You were afraid it wouldn't do:  
For your mother might object, —  
"Such little things I always wreck."  
And so on the morrow, again we met  
At a time, aforehand set.  
And that is where the story begins.  
The story, I have lived it since.  
I'll leave its flavor for another time,  
So rest content, with this little rhyme.

## AND OTHER POEMS

### The Poet's Soul

**T**HOU' I do not paint on canvas, yet the pictures that I see  
Are more beautiful than any that the masters' pictures be;  
Pictures of a golden sunset, in a mirrored lake,  
With the dancing shadows, that the wind-blown birches make.  
Pictures of contented homesteads, with the blue clouds rolling by  
And wide far-stretching pastures, where the sleeping cattle lie.  
Nor do I play with music, yet there's more music in  
My soul,  
Than any refrain in a music-master's roll.  
Music in the cowboy's song, as he rides the cactus  
Plains,  
Music in the broncho's gallop, as the rider gives the

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

Reins,

Music in the evening that the lonesome bit-  
tern rimes

With the songs of evening grosbeak and the  
pine-tree warbler's

Chimes.

## AND OTHER POEMS

### The Gipsy Maid

OH! gipsy maid, beneath the shade,  
Of pine trees branching low;  
Where at eve is thy head laid,  
Where the murmuring breezes blow?

Oh! Wanderer, thee I envy, — free  
From the busy haunts of men,  
To rest beside the foamy sea  
Or in forest's shady glen.

Your lightsome load, along the road,  
That leads to many a turn;  
You bear it glad, without a goad  
Tho' the sands of the desert burn.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

### Mother

I KNOW not how much mother feels,  
I know not of what mother thinks,  
I know not what her heart conceals,  
Nor how deep of the sorrow cup she drinks.  
But this I know and am right sure  
That when I'm gone she is ever sad,  
And a vision of her is a lure,  
That brings me back to make her glad.

### Rebels

SHAKE, you rebel, grip my hand,  
You're the bravest in the land;  
Rebel 'gainst what e'er it be,  
Life or system, or tyranny:  
Fighting in the paths of life,  
Struggling for the love of strife.

## AND OTHER POEMS

### To the Suffragettes of Occoquan

CAN we say our country is chivalrous and  
free,  
When women languor in their cells for sake of  
liberty?  
Why drag these ladies in the dust because their  
banners say,  
What our noble president wrote but yesterday;  
Why go championing over this whole sphere,  
And leave undone for freedom that which lies  
so near.  
Why go seek for freedom on the fields of France,  
Before we turn first homeward the liberating  
lance.  
Is this not hypocrisy that stalks abroad,  
Where once the men of Valley Forge and  
Gettysburg have trod?  
Give the women franchise so all the world can  
see,  
That even in this age our citizens are free.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

### The Canyon of Larney

I 'VE slept in the Canyon of Larney,  
Under the open sky;  
Lulled in my dreams  
By the tripping streams,  
Rumbling from crags on high:  
Sputtering along  
In a wondrous song, —  
In melodies old,  
As the tales that are told,  
To the hills in the Canyon of Larney.

## AND OTHER POEMS

### My Lady of Dreams

**M**Y beautiful dream is crushed, dispelled, —  
The fanciful dreams have fled;  
The thoughts of a thousand nights are quelled—  
My lady of dreams is dead.

Dead in body, dead in soul, —  
But living in spirit still;  
And I a midnight wandering ghoul,  
Have kept her memory as others will.

Neptune has stolen my fair bride,  
From happiness and from me;  
As she was riding on the tide,  
In the surf by the cruel sea.

Stolen her body, but living still;  
Ever her spirit dwells with me:  
Living my body, but to kill  
The thoughts and dreams of her memory.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

### Little Blue-Eyes

LITTLE Blue-eyes, I lost my head,  
Down by the river springs ago, —  
When the moon was high and the skies were red  
With the myriads of stars that flickered so!  
And the river rumbled, roared, and rolled,  
Swollen from mountain streams, —  
Breaking away even as you, I told,  
Little Blue-eyes of all my dreams.  
And our campfire sputtered and spit its sparks,  
Red, golden, strange colors of orient hue:  
Spring perfumes like incense from leaves and  
barks  
Were mingled with fragrance of the March  
night's dew.  
Remember, Blue-eyes, how we watched the skies  
And counted each star that was new;  
And listened in silence at Potomac's sighs,  
And whispered that love would always be true!

## AND OTHER POEMS

### Meditations

WHEN I meditate — that this my body  
must decay,  
And in the ground be laid away;  
And be the buttress of nature's forces,  
Which work silently, minutely night and day,  
Slowly like the funeral horses,  
That brought me where I lay:  
Then I raise my voice in protest to the skies,  
And in the anguish of my sighs,  
I cry against the uselessness of life;  
And against the foolishness of man — that lives  
and dies;  
Who fights evil and despair in a vain strife:  
To barter for a living, — who sells and buys.  
When I meditate that I must earn my bread  
And children in the home be taught and fed, —  
It seems that living is not worth its pleasures,  
Better, early that my dying words were said,  
My will be made and diggers take their measures,  
And mourners gather round the funeral bed.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

For what is life, but a vain strife for a few joys,  
Earned like the whipping of mischievous boys,  
Who are happy a while, then they feel the rod:  
So tremble we, for joys, before an unjust God.  
But is life what on the surface it appears?  
Bankrupt in body, soul forever in arrears?  
So be it to him, who has not felt the touch,  
Of love and hate, joys mingling with our tears,  
Who for woman's love has never suffered much,  
Nor felt the hand of love in his descending  
years.

Life we can but help to make,  
Only what we give can we returning take;  
For it is a vital fountain where we drink,  
Whose worth is measured by what we do and  
think.

## AND OTHER POEMS

### The Letter from Home

DICK — your letter came today  
And brought with it the happiest ray  
Of home, the farm, and its good cheer, —  
The best I've had for many a year.  
Your spelling, Dick, was rather quaint  
And you used wrong phrases such as "ain't,"  
But then, of course, a boy of eight  
Can't always write real up-to-date.  
You say we have a brand new dog,  
(I'll have to write that in my log.)  
And the rabbits, too, you say are left  
But for their keeper right bereft.  
I'm glad to hear all, brother mine,  
Write me, often, as you find time;  
And don't forget that on the sea  
Your letters are a boon to me.  
And you curly-headed, rascally blue-eyed lad,  
Can make me either gay or sad.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

To W. W. W.

YOU are a bronzed young giant of  
The plains,  
Where words are few and action  
Reigns:  
You're a son of the red blood  
Of the West, —  
You typify all that makes the  
Best.  
You're slow to speak and quick  
To act,  
You're rough, uncouth, and  
Lack the tact:  
But you move supreme in  
Physical skill,  
And you'll ride right through  
By power of will;  
Honesty shines in your eyes  
Of blue,  
An in a crisis they stick  
By you;  
And your sandy hair, like  
A ground-hog's skin,

## AND OTHER POEMS

May not look handsome, but  
    Fits right in.  
Your chin would build a  
    Pyramid,  
And a Panama Canal if you  
    Were bid:  
But you prefer to drift along,  
To taste of life and sing a  
    Song;  
And give aid to some  
    Needy friend,  
Or help a broken heart to  
    Mend, —  
To live and love in a  
    Generous way,  
To think little of ease and  
    Less of pay.  
You're a son of the West, a  
    King of the plains,  
Get back to it, where manhood  
    Reigns;  
The Artificial East with  
    It's enervated strain,  
Leave it behind, on a  
    Westbound train.

## RHYMES OF THE FLEET

### A Broken Heart

YOU will toy with hearts  
And pierce them with darts  
Of love — then leave them alone, —  
To wither and turn into stone.

You have played with my soul  
And now that your goal  
Is reached — you turn away —  
Cold as the insensible clay.

But my heart is the loot  
To bleed in your clasp  
Of deceit — which you have spoken, —  
Your calloused heart is my token.

## AND OTHER POEMS

### L'envoi

WHEN this war of wars has ceased,  
And the cannons have rusted away;  
When man no longer is beast,  
And all nations kneel to pray:  
When race for race has friendship  
And blood for blood has love, —  
Then the claws of enmity lose their grip  
By the thought of a God above  
When nation of nation seeks good will,  
Rather than war, distrust, intrigue, —  
Mankind again ascends the hill  
Which leads to the universal league.  
When the enlightened serf of Russia,  
Shakes hands with a liberated race  
Which once was the slave of Prussia,  
Now with freedmen takes its place:  
When labor's hand reaches o'er the sea  
And clasps the hand of his brother there  
Then when the world from war is free;  
Let sickly kings fight if they care!













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